

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

MARKED VERSION OF CLAIMS WITH PRESENT STATUS DELINEATED

- THE CLAIMS ARE HEREIN AMENDED, CANCELLED, OR ADDED TO, SO AS TO EVENTUATE IN THE NEW SET OF PENDING CLAIMS INDICATED BELOW. THIS LISTING OF CLAIMS WILL REPLACE ALL PRIOR VERSIONS AND LISTING OF CLAIMS IN THE APPLICATION.

-- The status of each claim is indicated after the claim number by use of a parenthetical identifier selected from: (Original), (Currently amended), (Canceled), (Withdrawn), (Withdrawn – currently amended), (Previously presented), (New), and (Not entered). Claim text is provided for each claim in the listing except for the claims status “canceled” or “not entered.” Only claims having the status of “Currently amended” or “Withdrawn – currently amended” include markings to indicate changes that have been made relative to the immediate prior version of the claims. The text of any deleted matter is shown by strike-through, except that double brackets, placed before and after deleted characters of five or fewer consecutive characters, may be used. The text of any added subject matter is shown by underlining the added text. Claims that were previously canceled that are reinstated here, if any, are reinstated by adding the claim as a “(New)” claim with a new claim number.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method Use of an alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide for the surface treatment of an alloy of silver ~~containing an amount of germanium that is effective to reduce firestain and/or tarnishing so as to reduce or further reduce tarnishing of the alloy such that a sample can be supported close above a 20% solution of ammonium polysulphide for at least 30 minutes while retaining a generally untarnished appearance~~ wherein said method comprises treating surface of said alloy with at least one material chosen from the group consisting of an alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide and dialkyl disulfide.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 1, wherein the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide has C.sub.12-C.sub.24 alkyl groups.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide is in an organic solvent.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 3, wherein the solvent containing the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide is generally neutral.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide is in a solvent based on n-propyl bromide.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide is used to form a combination chosen from a group consisting of [[in]]

(a) a composition obtainable by dissolving said alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide in an organic solvent and adding to said solution a relatively concentrated aqueous soap or detergent[[, or]]; and

(b) an aqueous dispersion obtainable by dissolving said alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide in an organic solvent, adding

to said solution a ~~relatively~~ concentrated aqueous soap or detergent, and diluting the resulting mixture with water ~~[[or]]~~; and

(c) a composition obtainable by dissolving said alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide direct in an aqueous mixture of an anionic surfactant and a neutral or anionic surfactant.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 6, wherein the combination further comprises a ~~[[a]]~~ treatment agent selected from an alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide, an anionic surface active agent and an amphoteric surface active agent in concentrations that are effective to solubilise the treatment agent.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 6, wherein the combination further comprises an alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide, an anionic surface active agent and a neutral surface active agent in concentrations that are effective to solubilise the treatment agent.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide is contained in a polish or impregnated into a polishing cloth.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~use~~ method of any preceding claim, wherein the alkanethiol or alkylthioglycollate is chosen from the group consisting of ~~selected from~~ stearyl mercaptan (octadecyl mercaptan), cetyl mercaptan (hexadecyl mercaptan), stearyl thioglycollate and cetyl thioglycollate.

11. - 19. (CANCELED)